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LB 1138

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Excuse me just a moment. Okay. Mr. President, members of the body, I'm sorry to keep you waiting. What the amendment does, the green copy of the bill, even with the committee amendments, would have increased funding in the municipal aid pool by \$500,000, and in the county pool by \$600...I'm sorry, I got that backwards, county \$500...\$900 county, \$500 city, thank you. At least somebody knows what we're saying here, thank you. That is taken out by the amendment to the amendment. Then the most significant change is the change in the way we would calculate, if you will, the poverty component in the county aid distribution formula. As I've indicated, the green copy of the bill counted poverty persons in a county based on U.S. census data. That U.S. census data is not as current as other data sources and, quite frankly in our estimation, is not as reliable as other data sources. So the proposal in the amendment to the committee amendments that I'm bringing to you is that we calculate those poverty numbers off information contained on income tax returns filed by residents of the county. And then we have a formulation that tells us when a particular filer is counted as a poverty student or poverty person. And we take a ratio that...we find an average for the state and half, if you're below half of that statewide average number, then you're counted as a poverty filer and we count the number of those and work that into the formula. Now with the change that is proposed in the amendment we would have a distribution of state aid to counties that is...would be in the manner that you see on the handout that was...should be on your desk and distributed. It is captioned up "County Aid LB 1138, Amount Distributed by Revised Draft by County". So we do have the proverbial printout and it is based on AM3187, together with the committee amendments so, if you wanted to see what the effect is. With that, Mr. President, I'd be happy to try to respond to questions, if you have them. The primary thrust of the proposals that you have before you again are a unification of several different pots of money that went out to municipalities or counties, not as significant a change for municipalities as it is for counties, but a unification of those pots of dollars and an attempt to distribute them with a greater equalization effect than we had in the past.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD PRESIDING